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## CHILD LABOR AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Two problems which keep the superintendent awake at night are: to get all the children to school, and to get good teachers for all the schools. The superintendent very soon finds that he cannot solve the first of these problems unless the child labor laws are enforced; and the work of the National Child Labor Committee in helping to secure and to enforce these laws cannot bear its legitimate fruit unless we put good teachers into the schools.

There does seem to be a time in the life of the average boy when he holds the almighty dollar so close to his eyes that he sees nothing else in God's universe. You can sometimes keep the boy at school by showing him the value in future earning power of an education; but there are multitudes of boys, and even girls, whom you cannot get to school if they are allowed to go to work, that is, if they see at the end of the week several dollars that they can spend. Suppose you have kept the child out of the factory and out of the mine, what have you done? You have only begun the work. Punctuality is a school virtue; industry is another school virtue; obedience is still another school virtue. I feel in this connection like emphasizing veracity as a school virtue. I do not look upon deception about a child's age as an unimportant thing; the child that is taught to give an age two or three years below the real age in order that it may cheat the trolley company out of a nickel thereby forms habits of dishonesty that very easily lead to dishonesty toward the employer and the commonwealth and the nation.

If I had to write above the school the one grand aim of the effort of the school, I would put there in electric letters, "Truth." Truth is the aim on the intellectual side, and what truth is in the domain of the intellect, that truthfulness or veracity is on the side of conduct.

Does the child acquire these school virtues upon the street? Does it even acquire these virtues in a school in charge of a poor or inefficient teacher? The very atmosphere of a good school inculcates school virtues without which the individual cannot hold a place in any industrial establishment, even though he knows the catechism by heart, or can repeat entire chapters of the sacred Scriptures.

I claim, then, that on the side of character building we have only begun the work when we have excluded the child from the mine and the factory. Work, it has been said this evening, is an essential in the development of the child. It is the business of the school to prepare the child for civilized life; and it is characteristic of civilized man that he works, and that he finds pleasure in work, and that he is never quite satisfied when he is out of work, as for instance, during a strike.

The savage, on the other hand, dislikes work. He may impose it upon others, upon his captive or his squaw, but as for himself, he prefers sport and games and gambling, the excitement of the chase and of war.

Now if the child is to be trained for civilized life, it must be taught while at school not only how to work, but to find pleasure in work. It must acquire not only habits of work, but the power to stick to work even when the work becomes irksome; and that is only done under an efficient teacher.

We may view work as to its products. The products of work outside of the school bring a price in the market, and that is what interests the manufacturer; but the laws of nearly all states now say that the time of the child up to a certain age is so valuable that it must not be spent upon making things that will sell, but must be devoted to school work that will fit the child for the duties of civilized life.

There is another aspect of work that interests you people, and that is the reflex influence of work upon the worker. The very first paper to-night discussed the reflex influence of factory work upon the body of the worker. That is not all that this organization should study. The reflex influence of work upon the heart and the mind, upon the disposition and upon the character is quite as important as the reflex influence of work upon the body of the

worker. It is right there that I think the school must step in and help the work that you are trying to accomplish. If the reflex influence of the work that is done at the school makes the boy despise work with the hand, all your effort to have the child excluded from the factory and the mine and put into school is labor lost. If the life of that school does not beget in the pupil the ability to find pleasure in work, the ability to stick to work when the work becomes irksome, the ability to stand at his post and do his duty, then the school has failed, and your work is also a failure.

It is from this point of view that we have taken a profound interest in all this child labor legislation. I studied many phases of history when I was a student at the University, but of all the kinds of history that gave me encouragement in my studies, the history of legislation to save the child from white slavery in England was the most encouraging; and in spite of all the defects in the enforcement of our child labor laws, I still see in these efforts a happy day dawning upon us; I see in these efforts a means by which the superintendent can bring all the children to school.